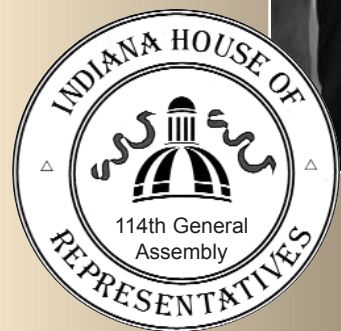
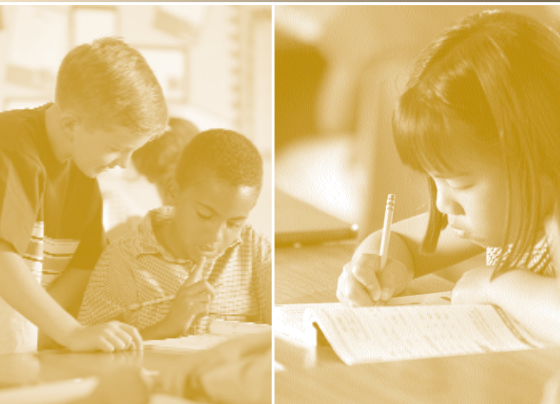


State Representative

Sheila Klinker



Session Report



- ☒ The New State Budget
- ☒ Changes in Education Requirements
- ☒ Economic Development Initiatives
- ☒ Legislation Impacting Meth



INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET

Despite the fact that the new state budget passed by a narrow margin this session, there are some positive things that were included in it.

The first accomplishment that I am proud to report is funding for 400 new caseworkers to help prevent and address child abuse and neglect cases across the state. In addition, Purdue University was awarded \$25.6 million for general repairs and rehabilitation and \$43.6 million for utility and infrastructure improvements.

Judges and Prosecutors will also get a pay raise through this year's budget which is long overdue; these professionals have not had a salary increase since 1985. The raise will be paid for through court fines.

My concerns about this budget bill are based on the threat of school funding cuts and increased property taxes as a result.

After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, this budget will cut state funding for many schools and may increase property taxes by nearly \$850 million statewide. Local officials will have the option to raise Local Option Income Taxes to offset potential property tax increases.

I voted "NO" on the final version of the state budget because of the negative impact it will have on education, children and those who pay property taxes.

We all fear that teacher layoffs and increased class sizes will occur as a result of this tight budget.



Unlike in past budgets, there are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools this year, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. In addition, a new method has been used in funding schools with this budget in which the money "follows the child," so growing school corporations do well, while districts which are already struggling and losing kids will also lose money.

Those corporations will likely be forced into eliminating teachers, cutting programs and increasing class sizes. Any additional funding for schools will have to come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will also be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC) dollars due to a cap. This eliminates the promise of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic

and controversial statewide reassessment.

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by five percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

Education Issues Update

A number of important education bills were approved this session outside of the state budget. As I discussed above, the new budget will shortchange many schools and force them to eliminate programs and lay off teachers, factors that will hurt our children's ability to get a quality education.

Here are other major education measures passed in 2005:

Starting in the 2010-11 school year, students will have to complete the Core 40 curriculum in order to graduate. Core 40 requires students to receive credits in a series of advanced courses, including English and language arts, math, science, social studies and foreign languages.

One bill will **change the enrollment date for kindergarten to August 1 from July 1**, although there was no funding appropriated for this change. Another bill will require schools to adopt rules to prohibit bullying, and require the State Board of Education to set up cheerleading safety standards and guidelines.

Several proposals were defeated, including plans to move the ISTEP+ test to the spring. Attempts to revive the school voucher program and tax credits also failed to pass due to a lack of state funding.



Making Strides for Economic Development

Economic development is one of the best ways to protect our quality of life through investing in high-paying jobs and quality education opportunities for our families.

In fact, recent economic development measures passed by the Indiana General Assembly have helped our very own Purdue Research Park win the 1st place award for best research park from the Association of University Research Parks in 2004.

ECONOMIC TOOLS

The very first bill passed into law this session created a new public-private entity—the Indiana Economic Development Corporation—to serve as the leader for development efforts across our state.

Another very important piece of legislation, House Bill 1120, saved enterprise zones and created public school foundations statewide. That bill also established a Regional Development Authority to enhance transportation through Northwest Indiana to Chicago. It included language and funding to build a new Colts Stadium as well.

Other measures were passed which will extend the deadline for property tax abatements and TIF districts, codify the Research and Development Sales Tax Exemption/Credit, and give additional tax breaks to small business owners to reduce the potential that they will be harmed by government regulation.

SPURRING NEW GROWTH

Much of the economic development language that passed was aimed at drawing in new businesses to support job growth. One of those measures will speed up the process of preparing sites for development, making them “shovel-ready” which will help alleviate some of the brownfield problems in central Indiana.

Another bill establishes a Headquarters Relocation Credit to entice corporations to move their operations to Indiana.

These changes, when implemented together, will help showcase Indiana as a thriving economy with opportunities for meaningful work and a high quality of life.



Rep. Klinker visits with Mr. James Bodenmiller, member and former chairman of the Indiana Arts Commission, at the Statehouse.



A Tribute to one of the Greats



Rep. Klinker honors Coach Keady on his retirement on the floor of the House Chamber.



Rep. Klinker speaks about Coach Keady's legacy at Purdue.



Rep. Klinker congratulates Coach Keady on a remarkable career.

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New Laws Address Meth Epidemic



Lafayette Police Chief Don Roush and Deputy Chief John Dennis both helped to establish the Methamphetamine Abuse Task Force which shaped this year's legislation.

It has become a recurring theme each legislative session: the Indiana General Assembly passes new laws designed to stop the production and use of the drug meth. The 2005 session was no different, as we restricted the sale of cold and allergy medicines and other products that contain ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, two ingredients used to make meth.

In recent years, legislators have passed a series of bills aimed at stopping meth. One of those creations was the statewide Methamphetamine Abuse Task Force, which came up with the concepts contained in this new law. Other measures help police and

prosecutors track down people who purchase large amounts of the chemical reagents used to make the drug and require people convicted of meth-related offenses to help pay for cleaning up sites where they produced the drug.

When this law takes effect on July 1, most stores will be required to keep the drugs in a locked case or behind a counter. In addition, customers will be limited to three grams—about 100 tablets—of the medicines per week. To make a purchase, they will have to show a state or federal ID and sign a logbook.

This legislation is patterned after an Oklahoma law that has helped result in an 80-percent reduction in meth labs found in that state.

Other crime legislation that was passed this session included Senate Bill 164 which will require a person convicted of possession of child pornography with a prior conviction for the same offense to register as a sex offender, and House Bill 1057 which makes it a Class C infraction for a person in the passenger compartment of a motor vehicle to possess an alcoholic beverage container that has been opened, has a broken seal or from which some of the contents have been removed.

Representative Sheila Klinker

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